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TUESDAY
JANUARY 5, 1954

A leaden sky and brisk snowfall this morning. Had a walk along the picturesque Kaiser Wilhelm I Promenade, [redacted] Mozart is made much of in Bad Gastein but it is not yet clear to me what connection he had with it. A whole range of delectable chocolates are named for him, with his picture in gay red on the box covers.

Lunched, rested, took the baths at five o'clock, rested, dined, slept. In intervals between these activities, addressed myself to Philippe Erlanger's "Life of the Regent". This remarkable man, worn to death by his debaucheries at the age of forty-nine, was charming, brave, gifted, intelligent, and equipped to be a great king. His uncle, Louis XIV, sequestrated him from any real participation in political life and, when his martial successes made him popular, forced his withdrawal from the field. It is a wonderfully interesting account of the epoch, and leaves one, as does the same author's "Life of Monsieur", quite revolted by Louis XIV's cynicism, selfishness, arrogance, and at times stupidity. One striking feature of this period was the high rate of infant mortality in the House of France. Erlanger attributes this in considerable measure to the gross, even criminal, inefficiency of the court doctors, who decimated whole broods of children. To survive, it was preferable to be born poor. I should like to see the reckoning of the number of births in three generations of Louis XIV's line as compared with the number still alive after ten years. The same was apparently true at contemporary courts in Europe and in England. Queen Anne, who reigned at London during about the same period as the Regency, had sixteen offspring and left no heir.

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